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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 2007

In Today's Papers

Erdogan Announces New Turkish Cabinet

All papers report Thursday and today Prime Minister Erdogan submitted the new cabinet list to President Abdullah Gul. "I prepared the new cabinet as a team with the skills to realize our goals for the coming period. I believe that we formed a strong team," Erdogan said after Gul approved the list of 25 ministers.

The new cabinet includes eight new ministers, with six members of the former cabinet excluded. Nimet Cubukcu is again the only woman in the cabinet. Former Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc was denied a seat in the cabinet, but is expected to be given a key position in party administration. New Interior Minister Besir Atalay, a figure known to be close to President Gul, had been vetoed by former President Sezer as Education Minister. Economy matters will be coordinated by Deputy Prime Minister Nazim Ekren, who was the "shadow economy minister" in the previous government with his expertise in banking and monetary issues. State Minister Mehmet Simsek, formerly a specialist at Merrill Lynch, will be in charge of the Treasury Undersecretariat. Gul is expected to continue to be active in foreign affairs, and many observers expect him to overshadow the "young and inexperienced" new Foreign Minister Ali Babacan on the international stage.

Papers report the new cabinet was welcomed by Turkish business and industry circles. The government program will be read out in the Parliament on Friday and a vote of confidence is to take place September 5.

Ice Melting between Gul and Military

All papers report after the military's top brass snubbed Abdullah Gul's swearing-in ceremony in parliament on Tuesday, and on Wednesday gave him a chilly reception at a military graduation ceremony in Ankara, the strains between the military and the president ended at Victory Day celebrations in Ankara on Friday. During the ceremonies General Buyukanit held warm talks with Gul and Erdogan, and at the end of a military-hosted reception in the

evening, both politicians were seen off by Buyukanit himself.

Pentagon Probes US Weapons in Hands of the PKK

All papers report the Pentagon "admits" that US weapons sent to Iraq went into the hands of PKK terrorists. Papers report Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell as saying Wednesday that the department's inspector general, retired General Claude Kicklighter, will go to Iraq next week to investigate the matter. Morrell said the investigation into US weapons in Turkey was sparked in May when Pentagon officials learned that the Turks were concerned about American-issued weapons being involved in crimes in their country. Papers also report that Morrell said, "If American-issued weapons have ended up in the hands of terrorists in Turkey that is not based on the policy of this department or this government".

DTP Claims Turks Use Chemical Weapons against the PKK

All papers report in a message on the occasion of August 30 Victory Day, Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP accused the Turkish military of using chemical weapons in security operations against the PKK. The DTP message noted the fact that the bodies of 11 PKK members killed in Uludere in the province of Sirnak have not been handed over to their families strengthens the claim chemical weapons were used in the operation. Papers report that General Buyukanit denied the claims calling them "lies."

Editorial Commentary on Turkey-EU

Erdal Safak commented in the mainstream Sabah (8/31): "The EU's month-long holiday is ending today. EU Commission officials will have a lot to do, especially the Turkey desk officials. Those bureaucrats will evaluate Turkey's progress on reforms in the past year but, unfortunately, there has been no progress on Turkey's EU reforms worth mentioning. No steps have been taken on the EU's

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priority issues, such as changes in Turkish Penal Code Article 301, the article under which writers and journalists have been prosecuted for "insulting Turkishness;" Cyprus; Halki Seminary; and the Foreign Foundations laws. We are still hopeful that the reform calendar will be announced in the new Government's activity program. A few visits to some EU countries and especially one to Brussels by President Gul, might help raise Turkey's grade on the progress report."

TV Highlights

NTV, 7.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- The 85th anniversary of the Turkish victory in the Battle of Dumlupinar, the final conflict of the 1922 Turkish War of Independence, was celebrated with ceremonies across Turkey.
- Secretary Rice phoned President Abdullah Gul to congratulate him on assuming his new post.
- Interior Ministry inspectors said police officials in Trabzon cannot be charged with neglect with regard to the murder of Armenian journalist Hrant Dink.
- Eight PKK terrorists have been killed in fighting with the security forces in Pervari in the southeastern border province of Sirnak.

International News

- A survey conducted by the European Commission's "Eurobarometer" shows Turkey on top of the list of "countries that are set to join the EU in the near future." Turkey ranked first with 34 percent in the survey conducted through talks with 27,000 respondents.
- EU Commission President Barroso welcomed the decision of French President Sarkozy to soften attitudes towards Turkey.
- Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said Iranian troops continue to attack PJAK targets despite the note of protest submitted to Tehran.

- A flight in the US was canceled Tuesday night after passengers reportedly became uncomfortable when six Arabic-speaking men got into a heated discussion.

WILSON